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ISRAEL GETS MORE MUNITIONS FROM U.S., STEPS UP GAZA OFFENSIVE

Heavy fighting raged overnight and into Sunday across Gaza, as Israel pressed ahead with its attack backed by fresh munitions sent by the US

TEL AVIV UNDER INT'L PRESSURE FOR CEASEFIRE

Israel has faced rising international outrage and calls for a permanent ceasefire after the killing of thousands of Palestinian civilians. Nearly 85 per cent of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced within the besieged territory, where UN agencies say there is no safe place to flee. US helped its ally by vetoing the Security Council's efforts to end fighting

WAR TO GO ON UNTIL HAMAS ELIMINATED: BIBI

- Israel's PM Netanyahu said on Sunday he had told the leaders of France, Germany, and other countries: "You cannot on the one hand support the elimination of Hamas, and on other pressure us to end the war, which would prevent the elimination of Hamas"
- UN Secretary-General Guterres said he would appeal for a ceasefire

$100m

WORTH OF TANK AMMUNITIONS HAVE BEEN SOLD BY THE U.S. TO ISRAEL

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Rajasthan and Delhi Police arrive in Jaipur on Sunday with an accused in the murder of Karni Sena president Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi | PTI

Jt police team arrests two shooters for Karni Sena chief's murder

RAJESH ASNANI & UJWAL JALALI @ Jaipur/New Delhi

RAJASTHAN police have arrested two culprits in the murder of Karni Sena chief Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi in Chandigarh in a Saturday night joint operation with the Delhi police.

The two shooters, named Nitin Fauji and Rohit Rathore, have been brought to Jaipur along with co-accused Ramveer. So far, four have been detained in connection with the murder of Gogamedi, who was shot dead on December 5 in his house. The two believed to be shooters were planning to flee to Nepal, police said.

ADG Crime Dinesh M N in a statement said both Rohit and Nitin were found hiding in a room above a liquor vend. Jaipur police commissioner Biju George Joeseph had deployed seven from his team for the operation.

The police decided to wait until midnight for the operation to ensure minimal risk. The police apprehended both the shooters and their accomplice Udham Singh who assisted them in their escape.

A senior Delhi Police officer said that the Crime Branch was tracking the shooters movement for the last 72 hours after the Rajasthan Police approached them.

"Rajasthan Police provided intel that the shooters, after killing Gogamedi took a taxi to Didwana in Rajasthan. From there, they boarded a bus to Delhi," Special CP RS Yadav told reporters. The shooters had concealed their weapons after the murder. However, they were using mobile phone during their escape which helped in tracing them.

> The shooters and their facilitators have been arrested in the first phase. The next phase is about reaching out to the mastermind and conspirators
>
> Joseph, Jaipur police commissioner

Police interrogation has revealed that Nitin Fauji is from Mahendragarh in Haryana and Rohit Rathod from Nagaur district in Rajasthan. They were in contact with gangster Rohit Godara following the murder.

Simultaneously their handler Virendra Charan provided them with logistics, weapons and money.

Tribal leader Vishnu Deo Sai is C'garh CM

Swearing-in likely on December 12-13 with two deputy CMs; former CM Raman Singh may become Speaker

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

VISHNU Deo Sai, 59, a senior tribal leader and former Union minister, will be the next chief minister of Chhattisgarh after he was elected the leader of the BJP legislature party in Raipur on Sunday.

Former chief minister Raman Singh proposed Sai's name, which was seconded by state BJP president Arun Sao and senior MLA Brijmohan Agrawal at the party state office. Singh hinted that he might assume the responsibility as a Speaker of the state Assembly and there could be a possibility of two deputy chief ministers.

After getting elected unopposed as CM-designate, Sai met Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan at the Rajbhavan to stake claim to form the government with 54 members in the newly elected House in Chhattisgarh. On Sunday evening, Chhattisgarh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan extended the formal invitation to Sai to form government.

Sai will be the second tribal chief minister of Chhattisgarh after late Ajit Jogi, who was the first Congress CM of the state in November 2000.

"Our priority will be to fulfil the promises made in our manifesto during the next five years. To begin with, the BJP government will approve the bonus payment of the two years for the paddy growers on December 25 and constructing houses for the 18 lakh poor who remained deprived under the PM Awas Yojana during the last five years," the CM-designate told the media persons.

Chhattisgarh CM-designate Vishnu Deo Sai (R) meets Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan to stake claim to form government, at the Raj Bhavan on Sunday | ANI

Ex-CM proposes

The proposal to elect Sai as the legislature party leader was moved by former chief minister Raman Singh, which was seconded by Arun Sao and senior leader Brijmohan Agrawal

Speaking to reporters, Sai admitted that he has his work cut out as the state's financial health is weak, for which he blamed the previous Congress-led government.

Sai hails from Bagiya village in Sarguja division, where the BJP snatched all 14 seats from the Congress.

According to BJP sources, the oath-taking ceremony may take place either on December 12 or 13, depending on the availability of Prime Minister Narendra Mod.

The BJP had not projected anyone as the party's CM face this time during the assembly elections and the party sought votes in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Selection part of grand strategy for LS polls

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE decision to make tribal leader Vishnu Deo Sai Chhattisgarh chief minister was part of a strategy to boost the BJP's performance in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Known for his sharp organisational skills, the 59-year-old has wide acceptance in the tribal communities. According to political observers, his selection as CM was in-principle made when Union home minister and BJP's principal strategist Amit Shah told voters that Sai would get a 'big job' after elections.

Chhattisgarh shares it border with Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. "In all these states, tribals have considerable presence. After the election of President of India, the BJP's political think-tank with consent of PM Modi had played the second masterstroke to woo the tribal community ahead of the LS election by appointing a prominent tribal face as CM in Chhattisgarh, which has more than 7.5% of India's total tribal population," said a senior BJP functionary. He added that PM Modi's vision is to make the tribal vote bank attached with the saffron party on the basis of the work done for the community as well as the representation accorded to tribal leaders.

In Chhattisgarh, the BJP almost swept in tribal areas in the assembly election by winning 17 out of the 29 seats reserved for ST candidates for the 90-member Assembly. Working through a national plan for the ST population, the BJP, taking a lesson from the setback in tribal-dominated seats in 2018, has made its concerns and works visible and known among the ST people over the past five years. With the appointment of Sai, the saffron party has further bolstered its image of being the champion of tribal causes.

EXPRESS READ

I.N.D.I.A bloc to meet in Delhi on December 19

New Delhi: "The 4th meeting of the leaders of I.N.D.I.A parties will be held on Tuesday December 19 in New Delhi at 3 pm," Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said on 'X' on Sunday. The parties intend to move forward with the unity theme - "Main Nahin, Hum" (We, Not Me) - as a counter to PM Narendra Modi at the meeting, a senior Congress leader said.

Govt high schools to get telescopes & microscopes

Bengaluru: To promote 'Science for All', the Karnataka government on Sunday announced that government high schools will have access to microscopes and telescopes to encourage scientific temper among children. Minister for Minor Irrigation, Science, and Technology NS Boseraju has instructed officials to design a new policy 'Provide Access to Telescopes' (PAT). P4

Details sought from Sahu on cash: J'khand Cong

Ranchi: Jharkhand Congress In-charge Avinash Pandey on Sunday said clarification has been sought from party MP Dheeraj Sahu in connection with the recovery of huge cash from premises linked to him. Pandey clarified that is it a private matter of Sahu and the party has nothing to do with it. "Since he is Congress MP, he should make a statement about how such a big amount of money came to him," Pandey said.

COLOURFUL START

CM Siddaramaiah inaugurates 'Namma Jaatre' folk festival at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Illegal towers: CM directs officials to impose fines on errant telecom firms

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah has directed the officials to impose fines on the firms that have set up mobile towers illegally across the State.

Siddaramiah issued this direction after receiving a letter from former Congress MLA Ramesh Babu, who suggested that the State government should impose fines on telecom service providers for installing towers illegally. "The State can generate Rs 7,000 crore through this," he stated.

Ramesh said as per Karnataka Installation of New Telecommunication Infrastructure Towers Regulations 2019, installation charges up to Rs 1 lakh are imposed in BBMP limits, Rs 50,000 in other mahanagara palike limits, Rs 35,000 in city municipal limits and Rs 15,000 in gram panchayat limits. In BBMP limits alone, there are around 8,000 such towers and 48,000 across the State.

Ramesh stated that many of them have been set up without paying installation charges, causing a big loss to the State's exchequer. He appealed to Siddaramaiah to direct the officials to collect the installation charges along with other taxes. He also pointed out that other states collect fees up to Rs 2 lakh for mobile towers. Karnataka should increase the fees.

4 students die as car plunges into drain near Chikkaballapur

V VELAYUDHAM @ Chikkaballapur

FOUR college students died when the car in which they were travelling plunged into an open drain near Kelagina Thotta on the outskirts of Chikkaballapur around 10.30pm on Saturday.

The deceased have been identified as Tagore, 21, a resident of Chintamani, Vasanth, 20, and Aryan,19, from Chikkaballapur, and Pavan, 20, a resident of Hebbal in Bengaluru. They were friends and studying in different colleges in Bengaluru, Superintendent of Police DL Nagesh told *The New Indian Express*.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the boys were going to Chikkaballapur from Bengaluru. Rash and negligent driving by Pavan could be the reason for the accident. The house of one of the boys is close to the spot where the accident occurred, Nagesh further said.

Drivers and passengers of other vehicles alerted the police after seeing the car in the roadside drain. A police team from Chikkaballapur was sent to the spot immediately. Policemen along with some personnel from Fire and Emergency Services and villagers retrieved the bodies from the mangled car, he said.

The car plunged into an open drain near Kelagina Thotta on the outskirts of Chikkaballapur | EXPRESS

Mayawati names nephew Akash Anand as heir apparent

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

IN an open endorsement to 'dynastic politics', BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday declared her nephew Akash Anand as her political heir at an all-India meeting of the party here.

Twenty-seven-year-old Akash, an MBA from London, has been active in the party since 2017 and, at present, he is a national coordinator. He is the son of Mayawati's younger brother Anand Kumar.

Although the press statement issued after the meeting doesn't mention the development, the party's lone MLA in UP, Uma Shankar Singh, confirmed that the development.

BSP's Shahjahanpur district unit chief Udayveer Singh told reporters that Akash has been declared the 'uttaradhikari' by Mayawati.

BSP MLC Bhim Rao Ambedkar also confirmed the announcement. "We have got a youth leader in Akash Anand. In states where the party organisation is weak, Anand will be strengthening it," he said.

"Anand has been associated with the BSP since 2017. During the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, he addressed a rally in Agra," Ambedkar said. According to a BSP statement, Mayawati called upon party workers to increase the party's support base.

Toy cluster at Koppal was a bad idea, opine experts

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

INDIA'S first toy cluster project at Koppal is yet to take off as expected. The foundation stone for this ambitious project was laid three years ago with much fanfare.

In 2021, the State government, in association with a leading toy manufacturing company, initiated the project by signing six MoUs with toy makers and suppliers. But only three units, two from Belagavi-based Aequs Private Ltd. which has set up the cluster, have started operations.

Since the project was launched during the BJP rule and is being managed by a private firm, the Congress government seems to be not showing much interest in promoting it. However, industry experts say the location selected is not ideal for the toy cluster. The then CM BS Yediyurappa laid the foundation stone for Koppal Toy Cluster (KTC) in January 2021.

Spread over 400 acres of land, the cluster can accommodate at least 100 manufacturing units, generating over 25,000 direct and over one lakh indirect employment opportunities. After three years, only three units have started operations with a few hundred workers.

Former CM Jagadish Shettar said it is the responsibility of the company, which had purchased land to set up the toy cluster, to bring more companies. As industries minister in the Yediyurappa cabinet, Shettar played a significant role in bringing the project to Koppal. "It is not government land, the company purchased over 400 acres from local farmers directly. The government only gave tax concession and licences," he said. Shettar, who is now with the Congress party, said he is not aware of the present status of the project.

"Looks like the project has failed. It is the private company which has to promote it," said Basavaraj Rayareddi, former minister and Congress MLA from Yelaburga assembly constituency in Koppal district. He had attended the foundation laying ceremony. P6

SC TO PRONOUNCE ART 370 VERDICT TODAY

The SC is scheduled to pronounce its verdict on petitions challenging the abrogation of the provisions of Article 370